NEW AND DIFFERENT
STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
No 27
T-THE RAIN HAS WASHED AWAY THE LABELS!.. AND I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS MY MEDICINE..?
A CHARLTON PUBLICATION
10¢

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MELODY of HATE
WHY WAS HE INTERESTED IN THE FATE OF THE MISSING MUSICIAN.....?
WHAT WAS HIS MISSION AT THE BRIDGE...WHERE HE WAS MYSTERIOUSLY ATTACKED?
WHO INFORMED HIM THAT THE ONE DEAREST TO HIM WAS IN DANGER...?
TO NEAL VALENTINE...SONG WRITER...THE SITUATION WAS LIKE AN INTRICATE, CONFUSING MUSICAL COMPOSITION .... A
MELODY OF HATE!
THERE WAS NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THE WAY NEAL VALENTINE BURST INTO THE OFFICE OF SONG PUBLISHER HARRY JEFFERSON. BUT IN SPITE OF THE PRESENCE OF JILL...NEAL'S FIANCEE AND HARRY'S NIECE...THE RECEPTION HARRY GAVE NEAL THIS TIME WAS NOTICEABLY COOL.....
I THINK I'VE GOT A HIT HERE, HARRY!
OH...ER, HELLO, NEAL...
ANOTHER HIT? OH, ER...I DON'T KNOW, NEAL! LET'S SEE.... WHAT WAS THE NAME OF YOUR OTHER SONG? OH, YES...."HEARTSTRINGS" I DON'T KNOW ABOUT ANOTHER SO SOON, NEAL......
WHAT?!!

YOU TOLD ME JUST LAST WEEK TO BRING IN ANOTHER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!!
DID I? WELL, LEAVE IT HERE. I'LL LOOK IT OVER!

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, NEAL! I'VE NEVER SEEN UNCLE HARRY ACT THIS WAY BEFORE! IT BEGAN WHEN I REMINDED HIM OF MY BIRTHDAY NEXT WEEK... I'LL BE TWENTY-ONE...
WHY WOULD HE BE UPSET OVER YOUR BIRTHDAY? HERE'S THE RUBY CLUB... LET'S GO IN A MINUTE!
NO PARKING

SORRY, BUT THE CLUB DOESN'T OPEN UNTIL .... HI, NEAL! COME ON IN!
RUB
OPENING SAT. NEXT PAUL STARR

HOW'S THE SESSION GOING, PAUL?
IT AIN'T, NEAL! BOPPY GATES WAS TO WORK WITH US ON PIANO AND HE DIDN'T SHOW FOR THE REHEARSAL! SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE AN HOUR AGO!
RUBY CLUB

PAUL STARR'S TRIO WAS TO OPEN AT THE RUBY CLUB SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER...AND THE DAILY REHEARSALS WERE IMPORTANT TO NEAL'S FRIEND...
IT'S THINGS LIKE THIS THAT MAKE ME WISH I'D LISTENED TO WHAT MOTHER SAID!
WHAT DID YOUR MOTHER SAY, MR. STARR?

"STAY OUTTA MUSIC!!"

AREN'T YOU MAKING TOO BIG A THING OUT OF THIS, PAUL? SO BOPPY'S A LITTLE LATE FOR YOUR REHEARSAL... HE'LL BE HERE EVENTUALLY, AND.... WHO'S THAT COMING IN?
AVALON AYRES. SHE SINGS WITH US.

SHE LATE, TOO?
NAH! SHE'S BEEN OUT LOOKING FOR BOPPY! SHE'S NUTS ABOUT THE GUY AND IS WORRIED ABOUT HIM!

AS THE WRITER OF A RECENT SONG HIT...NEAL WAS KNOWN AND LIKED BY MOST OF THE MUSICIANS....
BRACE UP, AVALON. MAYBE HE JUST TOOK A WALK...TO BE ALONE, OR...
NO, NEAL. THAT'S NOT LIKE BOPPY. HE WOULD HAVE CALLED.

I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR HIM! IT'S NOT LIKE BOPPY TO DISAPPEAR THIS WAY! I...I KNOW SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM!

FUNNY THING! BOPPY BEGAN TO ACT STRANGELY THE OTHER DAY AFTER A GUY CAME IN TO SEE HIM.... IT WAS THE SONG PUBLISHER, HARRY JEFFERSON!

BEFORE THE CONNECTION OF THE TWO NAMES COULD REGISTER WITH NEAL, THE FRONT DOOR OPENED AND ALL EYES TURNED....
HEY! LOOK... COMING IN!
IT'S BOPPY!

MYSTERY! MAGIC! SCIENCE! FUN!

To Amuse and Amaze Your Friends

5 IN 1 WAND

A necessary tool for the amateur magician and a good joke too Plastic, 14 inches long with white tips and a black center 5 exciting tricks—Rises, jumps, produces silk, etc

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Talk, Sing, Play thru your radio

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LOOK-BACK SCOPE

Your chance to have eyes in back of your head. See behind or alongside and no one knows you are watching. Fun everywhere you go.

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Place it on a chair under a cushion, then watch the fun when someone sits down! It gives forth embarrassing noises. Made of rubber, and inflatable. A scream at parties and gatherings.

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It bounces cockeyed, it curves, it dips it's impossible to catch It's sure to set all the kids on the block spinning after it There's a barrel of fun in every bounce of this amazing baseball

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TALKING TEETH

They move! They talk! They're weird! Guaranteed to shut the blabbermouths up for good. It'll really embarrass them. It's a set of big false teeth that when wound up, start to chatter away, like crazy. A great comic effect for false teeth on cold nights.

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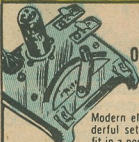
POWERFUL COMPACT ONE TUBE RADIO

Pocket Size . . . Brings in stations up to 1000 miles away

Modern electronics makes this wonderful set possible So small it will fit in a pocket Everything is supplied for you Easy to assemble in a few minutes with just a screw driver No soldering required Really powerful too Announcements of stations up to 1000 miles away come in so loud and clear you'd think they were right near home Learn many useful and important things about radio

No 205 **3.98**

BLACK EYE JOKE

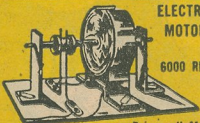
Show them the "naughty" pictures inside. They'll twist it and turn it to see, but all they do is blacken their eyes.

No. 216 .... **25¢**

Costume Set Designed for Every Boy

Style 160 — For you he-men, we've got the newest, most exciting and tremendous play suit of its time. A complete Superman outfit in fine durable washable rayon gabardine. Outfit includes red cape with screened Superman figure, navy and red suit with gilt figure "S", and belt. Be first to get this wonderful outfit. Sizes 4-14. .... **6.98**

ELECTRIC MOTOR

6000 RPM

—Drives all Models

This is an offer that sounds unbelievable but it is being made just the same Yes, you can have an actual electric motor for just 50¢ This compact little kit makes it a cinch to build this high-power motor And the fun you are going to get from using it It's so simple, and your motor is ready to turn out 6000 rpm's of power to work for you The coils of this remarkable tool actually turn at the rate of 1500 feet per minute

No 052 Only **50¢**

JOY BUZZER

The most popular joke novelty in years! Wind up and wear it like a ring. When you shake hands, it almost raises the victim off his feet with a "shocking sensation" Absolutely harmless.

No. 239 Only **50¢**

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Rush me the items listed below. If I am not satisfied I may return any part of my purchase after 10 days free trial for full refund of the purchase price.

ITEM #	NAME OF ITEM	HOW MANY	TOTAL PRICE

☐ I enclose ____________ in full payment. The Honor House Products Corp. will pay postage.

☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman on delivery plus a few cents postage.

NAME ______________________

ADDRESS ______________________

BOPPY GATES STOOD IN THE ENTRANCE, WET AND BEDRAGGLED.....
I WAS THROWN INTO THE RIVER AND LEFT FOR DROWNED!
GEE WHIZ ... DIG THE GUY'S CLOTHES! HE MUST HAVE BEEN DRAGGED ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER!

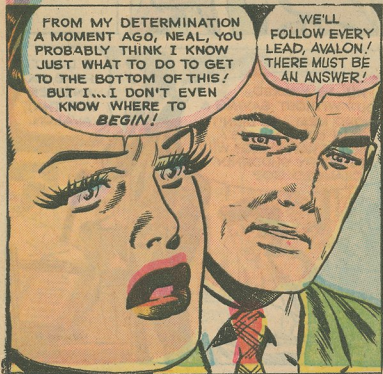
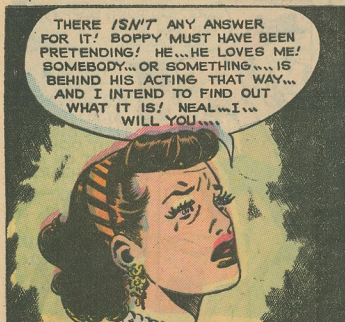
ARE YOU HURT, BOPPY? CAN YOU MAKE THE REHEARSAL?
TWO MEN ATTACKED ME, FOR NO REASON AT ALL, PAUL! I'M NOT HURT, BUT DON'T COUNT ON ME TO REHEARSE!

BUT WE NEED THIS REHEARSAL, WE'RE OPENING HERE SATURDAY, AND....
I'M NOT OPENING WITH THE TRIO!

WHAT? WHAT WAS THAT?
YOU HEARD ME, PAUL! YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOURSELF ANOTHER BOY!

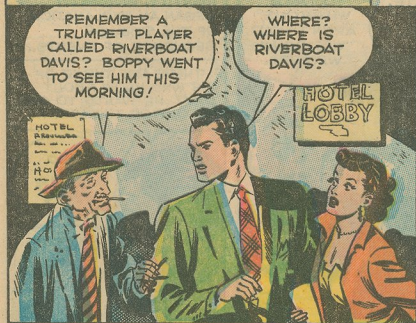
THE LITTLE GROUP STOOD IN SILENCE AS BOPPY GATES STRODE OUT OF THE CLUB. THEN, AS THOUGH AWAKENING FROM A BAD DREAM, AVALON AYRES CRIED OUT....

BOPPY! DON'T GO!
BUT BOPPY WAS GONE! WITH A SOB, AVALON SANK DOWN ON THE PIANO BENCH. TO NEAL, THE SITUATION HAD BECOME DOUBLY PUZZLING...

HE...HE WALKED OUT WITHOUT SAYING A WORD, NEAL. HE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT ME! WHAT IS HAPPENING? WHY HAS BOPPY SUDDENLY CHANGED SO?
I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT, AVALON.

LOCATING BOPPY'S HOTEL WAS NOT AS EASY AS NEAL HAD AT FIRST THOUGHT, FOR INSTEAD OF ITS BEING AMONG THE BETTER HOTELS PATRONIZED BY THE MUSICIANS, THEY FOUND IT IN A MUCH LESS RESPECTABLE SECTION OF THE CITY....

AS THEY PREPARED TO LEAVE THE DINGY HOTEL, A RASPY VOICE CAME TO THEM FROM THE LOBBY AND NEAL AND AVALON WHIRLED ABOUT....

NEAL PAUSED LONG ENOUGH TO STUDY THE SHABBY STRANGER MOMENTARILY.... THEN HANDED HIM A BILL....

RIVERBOAT ISN'T DOING VERY WELL THESE DAYS! LIVES IN A SHACK UNDER THE RISDON STREET BRIDGE....

NEAL DIDN'T WAIT FOR THE STRANGER TO FINISH! HE HAILED A TAXI FOR AVALON AND DIRECTED THE DRIVER TO TAKE HER HOME. THEN HE GRABBED ANOTHER CAB FOR HIMSELF...

AT THE BRIDGE, NEAL BOUNDED OUT OF THE TAXI AND HURRIED DOWN THE ROUGH EMBANKMENT!

MAKING HIS WAY OVER TO THE PARTLY HIDDEN SHACK, NEAL POUNDED ON THE RICKETY DOOR...
HEY, RIVERBOAT! OPEN UP! IT'S NEAL VALENTINE... LOOKING FOR BOPPY GATES! AND I ....

SUDDENLY THE DOOR WAS JERKED OPEN FROM WITHIN, AND A LARGE HAND CLOSED OVER NEAL'S WRIST!
HEY!!

BEFORE HE COULD REGAIN HIS BALANCE, HE FOUND HIMSELF FLAT ON THE FLOOR.... WITH TWO HUNDRED POUNDS SITTING ASTRIDE HIM....
HE SENT YOU, DIDN'T HE?!! SENT YOU TO GET ME, JUST LIKE HE SENT AFTER BOPPY! AND LIKE HE'LL...
WAIT A MINUTE, RIVERBOAT...!!
SAY...! YOU ARE VALENTINE, AREN'T YOU? THE SONG WRITER...

CONVINCED OF NEAL'S IDENTITY, RIVERBOAT BEGAN AN EXPLANATION OF THE STRANGE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS...
THERE ARE THREE OF US WHO KNOW ABOUT HIM! HE WANTS TO GET US OUT OF THE WAY....
WHO IS HE?

THE SONG PUBLISHER, HARRY JEFFERSON! HE WANTED SO BADLY TO BE IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS THAT HE STOLE THE FORTUNE LEFT BY HIS BROTHER! HE USED THE MONEY TO SET HIMSELF UP AS A PUBLISHER... AND TO KEEP IT GOING WHEN BUSINESS WAS BAD!

YOU SEE, BOPPY AND I KNEW HARRY WHEN HE WAS NOTHING BUT A HONKY TONK OPERATOR! WHEN BOPPY SHOWED UP HERE IN THE BIG TOWN, HARRY GOT SCARED, I SUPPOSE, AND TRIED TO HAVE BOPPY RUBBED OUT! HE FAILED, AND BOPPY LEFT TOWN.... HARRY'LL BE AFTER ME NEXT!
AND WHO'S THE THIRD PERSON WHO KNOWS?

HIS NIECE.... JILL... WILL FIND OUT ABOUT HARRY'S THEFT WHEN SHE'S TWENTY-ONE!
JILL?!!

NEAL'S LONG LEGS CARRIED HIM AT TOP SPEED TO THE NEAREST TELEPHONE...... WHERE WITH SHAKING HANDS HE DIALED JILL'S NUMBER....
WHAT?!! HER UNCLE CALLED HER TO HIS OFFICE ON AN IMPORTANT MATTER...?!!

ONCE AGAIN NEAL FLAGGED A TAXI.... WHICH IN A SHORT TIME WAS PULLING UP BEFORE THE THURSTON BUILDING WHERE HARRY'S OFFICE WAS!
IT'S AFTER HOURS... AND THE ONE ELEVATOR IS UP! I'LL MAKE IT QUICKER BY USING THE STAIRS!

ON THE EIGHTH FLOOR NEAL TIPTOED STEALTHILY TO THE DOOR OF HARRY'S OFFICE....
LOCKED! BUT I CAN HEAR VOICES INSIDE!
JEFFERSON MUSIC PUBLISHING CO.

THERE'S SOMEONE LEAVING THE OFFICE AT THE END OF THE HALL! MAYBE....

WHEN THE DEPARTING OFFICE WORKER DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW, NEAL RACED TO THE SLOWLY CLOSING DOOR!
MADE IT! ...JUST BEFORE IT LOCKED!
ME CO

INSIDE THE STRANGE OFFICE NEAL BOUNDED ACROSS TO THE WINDOW!
NOW TO GET OUT ON THE LEDGE!

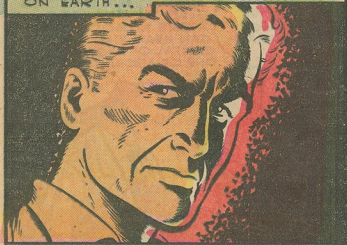
MEANWHILE, IN HIS OFFICE ON THE SAME FLOOR, HARRY JEFFERSON SPOKE TO HIS NIECE, JILL. HIS VOICE WAS SOFT, BUT HIS EYES WERE AS COLD AS STEEL!
THE COMBINED INFORMATION OF YOU, BOPPY GATES AND RIVERBOAT... IS ENOUGH TO SEND ME TO PRISON, JILL! IT'S A PITY THAT I CAN'T PERMIT YOU TO LEAVE THIS OFFICE ALIVE....
YOU MUST BE JOKING...

PRESSED AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING, EIGHT STORIES ABOVE THE DIZZYING SCENE BELOW... NEAL FOUND THE GOING DIFFICULT...

YES...YOU'RE ENTIRELY RIGHT, OF COURSE! THERE'S NOTHING TO DO BUT GIVE UP! I SUPPOSE MY DESIRE TO BECOME A BIG MUSIC PUBLISHER WAS TOO GREAT....TOO OVER-WHELMING.....AND THE MEN I HIRED FOR THE DIRTY WORK MUST BE PUNISHED TOO! I'LL GIVE THEIR NAMES!

MR. BLEEDING HEART

THEY'RE WAITING, MR. BLEEDING HEART! THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOUR LIPS TO MOVE AND THE WORDS TO COME OUT! AND ***YOU'RE*** SHIVERING--

THE WHOLE DEAL'S COCKEYED-CRAZY-- BUT ***YOU*** KNOW THAT THE GOOD OLD WORLD FUTURE DEPENDS ***ON YOUR NEXT FEW WORDS!*** AND YOU CAN'T EVEN THINK! ALL YOU CAN DO IS REMEMBER HOW HAPPY-GO-LUCKY YOU WERE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AGO DOWN ON EARTH...

...BACK AT THE TELEVISION STUDIO JUST BEFORE THE SHOW...

AT FIVE THOUSAND BUCKS A WEEK, I'D BE NUTS IF I DIDN'T GIVE IT A WHIRL! LEAD ME TO THEM----

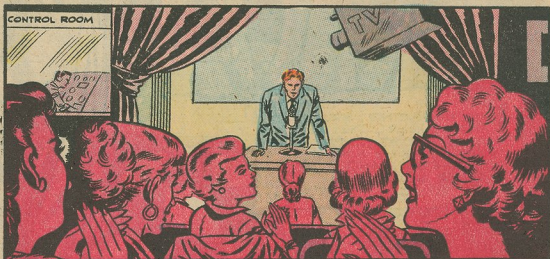
STUDIO

PROGRAM NOTES

WORDS FOR THE WEARY... THAT WAS THE NAME OF YOUR SHOW! AND IT WAS NOTHING MORE NOR LESS THAN AN ENDLESS PARADE OF MISERABLE PEOPLE BARING THEIR PROBLEMS BEFORE THE TV CAMERAS...

M-MY HUSBAND'S DISAPPEARED! WITHOUT (SOB) EVEN A GOODBYE NOTE OR ANYTHING!

AND WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE? YOU INTERVIEWED THEM... GETTING ALL THE SORDID DETAILS OUT OF THEM, AND THEN SENT THEM PACKING WITH BROMIDES OF USELESS ADVICE...

ONCE A WEEK, THE CAMERAS CAUGHT THE IMAGE OF THAT PARADE OF MISERY WITH YOU AS IT'S UNFEELING DRUM MAJOR! ONCE A WEEK, YOU COLLECTED FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS! AND YOUR POPULARITY RATING KEPT RISING HIGHER AND HIGHER...

SOMETIMES THE MEN AT THE STUDIO WERE CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR INNER FEELINGS...

BUT YOU WERE ALWAYS HAPPY TO GET HOME! AT HOME YOU COULD RELAX AND BE YOURSELF! YOU LOVED LIFE ON THAT GOOD OLD WORLD... AND YOU WERE HAPPY YOU HAD THE WHEREWITHAL TO ENJOY IT SO FULLY...

LATER THAT NIGHT, YOU WERE RESTLESS, AND YOU WENT FOR A WALK...

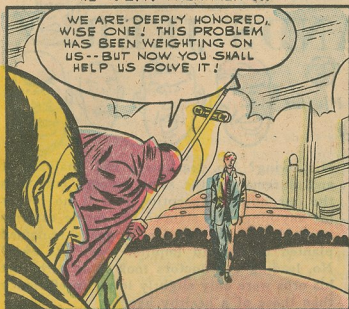
YOU'LL BE BACK SOON, WON'T YOU, DARLING!

A TEAM OF WILD HORSES COULDN'T KEEP ME AWAY!

BUT JUST AFTER YOU'D ROUNDED A CORNER...

YOU BLACKED OUT AFTER THAT-- AND WHEN YOU CAME TO, YOU WERE INSIDE A *FLYING SAUCER*...

YOU FIGURED IF THEY WERE SUCKERS ENOUGH TO THINK YOU WERE SUCH A BRAIN JUST FROM THAT TRIPE YOU THREW OUT ON THE TV SHOW, THEY'D BE SUCKERS FOR *ANYTHING* YOU TOLD THEM! AND THE PUBLICITY THAT YOU'D GET ONCE YOU RETURNED TO THE GOOD OLD WORLD! YOU'D BE NUTS TO SAY NO... SO YOU AGREED TO HELP SOLVE THEIR KNOTTY PROBLEM...

WHEN YOU HIT THE JOINT, THEY GAVE YOU THE V. I. P. TREATMENT...

STILL BOWING, THEY HUSTLED YOU RIGHT TO THIS BIG ARENA...

YES! OUR WAR COUNCIL HAS VOTED FOR THE INVASION! BUT THE PEOPLE AT LARGE VOTED TO BRING EARTH'S WISEST MAN UP HERE...TO ***DEBATE*** WITH THE COUNCIL LEADER...TO GIVE REASONS FOR EARTH'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE! AND IF YOUR REASONS ARE GOOD ONES...WE SHALL NOT MOUNT THE ATTACK!

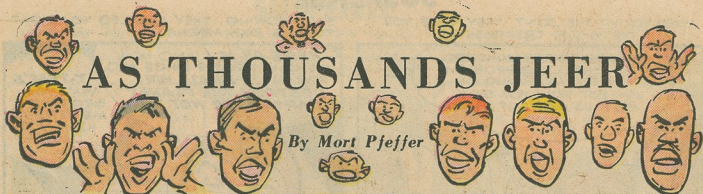
YOU TRIED TO WORM OUT OF IT! YOU TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT YOU WERE NOTHING BUT A RATTLEBRAIN WITH A SMOOTH TONGUE...BUT THEY HAD YOU TICKETED FOR EARTH'S NUMBER ONE BRAIN, AND NOTHING WOULD SWAY THEM...

QUITE A SPEAKER THAT GUY...QUITE A CASE HE'S BUILT UP! AND NOW IT'S ***YOUR*** TURN, MR. BLEEDING HEART! THEY'RE WAITING! THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOUR LIPS TO MOVE AND THE WORDS TO COME OUT...

YOU'VE ALWAYS LOVED THE GOOD OLD WORLD! BUT WHOEVER STOPPED TO THINK OUT ***WHY?*** HOW CAN YOU PUT YOUR VAGUE FEELINGS THAT IT'S JUST A SWELL PLACE TO LIVE ON AND THAT FOLKS ARE REALLY GOOD AT HEART, INTO WORDS THAT'LL SOUND CONVINCING? BECAUSE ***THAT'S*** JUST WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, MR. BLEEDING HEART! THE GOOD OLD WORLD'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOUR NEXT FEW WORDS! ***CAN YOU DO IT?***

THE **END**

AS THOUSANDS JEER

By Mort Pfeffer

THE day was miserable. So was Nick. Nor was his a strange attitude, considering that currently the only thing he led the league in was sighs. Truly a lofty tumble from his last year's eminence as batting champion. Today's foul weather had already caused the postponement of the game, but it was only a temporary reprieve. Tomorrow, he'd again drag himself up to the plate and make futile gestures with his bat at the pellet he now found so elusive. Why the very last time he had even so much as laid wood to the ball had been weeks ago in Chicago! And that effort had resulted in a towering pop-up to the second baseman who had disdainfully caught in his cap.

Looking back to the old days, he recalled with pleasure the many times he had come to bat and laid the good lumber to the horsehide and sent it soaring over the leftfield fence. What a thrill to trot around the bases grinning derisively at both the opposing team and hometown fans. Yes, the hometown fans! In his salad days, Nick had never been popular with fans. You see, he had been one of those brash players who had held the baseball fan in no higher regard than he would a baboon. He had deliberately alienated them; spurned their attempts at friendship, and what feats he had accomplished with his bat had been to spite them. They longed to see him fail, and, so to annoy them, he had performed heroically, wearing the while a contemptuous smirk.

The present sympathetic attitude of the local rooters, though, demonstrated clearly to Nick how wrong he had been. True, when first he had started whiffing they had cheered his failure as better news than a pennant winner. But as time and the other teams flew by, their manner had changed to one of acute sympathy. It wasn't fair to kick a man when he was down—and Nick was not merely down, but about six feet under! Now when he came to bat, his efforts (no matter how puny) were greeted with uproarious cheers, the fans hoping that this collective vote of confidence would snap him out of his basehit lethargy.

But it didn't. Well, what could be wrong? His swing? No, teammates had analyzed it and it remained the same, smooth cut, with the one notable exception that it no longer hit anything. His stance? No, movie cameras attested that his out-sized brogans remained planted in the old familiar way. His eyes? No, leading eye doctors took their oath that his orbs were only slightly lower in efficiency than those of a healthy hawk.

Nothing had changed. Nothing, that is, except his batting average and the fans' attitude! The fans! Wait! It was a mad thought, wilder than a southpaw screwballer, but still desperate measures were in order. Better to go down trying than to have the manager send him to the Belgian Congo.

Quickly, Nick grabbed his hat and dashed out of the lobby. A cab fetched him to an obscure part of town, where he whispered a few words into the ear of a workman. (No sense telling you what *kind* of a workman, or our story ends right here.) Money changed hands and soon Nick was back in the lobby, clutching several little packets, four by six inches in size.

"Oh, Peterson," the manager hailed him. "About your slump . . ."

"Don't worry about that, Skipper. Effective as of tomorrow, the slump will be only a memory. It'll be as dead as the spitball."

So saying, Nick slapped the manager on the back and hurried toward the elevator. So carried away by enthusiasm was he that he so far forgot himself as to fling the astonished attendant a nickel tip. The astonished eyes of the manager were witness to this last act of madness, and secured his conviction that Nick had at last given in mentally to his slump. Oh, well, he'd give him one more chance tomorrow. That failing, he could always trade him away to a sanatorium.

Nick was at the park early the next morning. At it, but not *in* it. And such was his intention as he loitered outside the bleacher entrance, greeting each arrival with a smile and a handshake. In the process of the latter, Nick managed to transfer a little card from his hand to each bleacherite.

Little card? Why, sure. Remember the little

four by six pockets that Nick had ordered? Well, they were now broken open and being employed to what Nick hoped would be good use.

"Hey, Nick, what do these cards mean?" asked one customer.

"Just read and comply, friend. Read and comply" replied Nick.

Soon the cards were finished. But there still remained the little matter of a batting slump. Was it also finished? Well, it wouldn't take long to determine. Nick quickly changed into his uniform, managing to elude both the icy glare and catcher's mask that the manager tossed at him for his tardiness.

When Nick stepped to the plate for the first time, the bases were loaded. And there was every prospect of their remaining so. Two were already out, and the way Nick had been going lately, his going down was virtually assured to be safer than a Jackie Robinson steal of second.

How many, many times had Nick failed in similar situations lately! Well, the situation was not *quite* as familiar as those of recent vintage, for this trip Nick was greeted with a thundering chorus of boos. So noisy was the disapproval that it made the swell of a mighty ocean sound for all the world like a gnat with laryngitis.

It was obvious now to the manager and Nick's teammates that the faithful had at last lost patience with their slugless slugger. This was confirmed as the opposing twirler buzzed two quick strikes by Nick who stood at the plate even more woodenly than his bat. Did they boo? Ever been to the zoo at feeding time? The manager hesitated. Should he yank Nick to avert bloodshed? Oh, what odds? Suppose the angry mob did dismember him. It would save a lot of typing and paperwork when it came time to make out Nick's unconditional release. Let the big dope take one more strike—and then a fast freight to a faraway place with a strange sounding name in Class D ball.

But what was that crack? Had an irate bleacherite snapped Nick's spinal column? No, Nick had put the wood against the ball and in turn put the pill against the leftfield fence. The hit was good enough to score two runs and save Nick's life.

As the game wore on, Nick continued to wear out the baseball. His big bat boomed a couple of round-trippers that distance-wise should have counted double. Then there was a sprinkling of wrong field singles and triples, just enough to show that Nick had regained his place hitting ability as well as his power.

Apparently, Nick's slump was over. Yet there was still one discordant note. No matter how noble and timely his batting endeavors, all were greeted by the same indignant growls by the fans. Indeed, the more effective the hit, the louder the jeers that greeted it. Yet through it all, Nick remained unruffled. Each time he crossed the plate, he tossed a snarl in the direction of the stands, occasionally alternating with a change-of-pace sneer.

Then, just when it seemed as though the United States Marines would have to save Nick from the ire of the fans, the game ended. His teammates formed a protective cordon around him and escorted him to the clubhouse. Quickly, the manager barricaded the door with a couple of utility infielders and drew Nick into the sanctuary of his office.

"Now don't get all excited about the fans booing me, Skipper," Nick said laughingly. "Things worked out just the way I planned. You see, I realized yesterday that I couldn't break my slump with them cheering me. Remember how well I used to wallop the apple when I thought it made them mad?"

The manager nodded solemnly. "Yes, but I still don't see how . . ."

"Simple," answered Nick, extracting one of his little cards from his jacket. He paused, then read it aloud: "Don't cheer—jeer! I'll never get a hit until you fans start to hate me as you used to. Despise me the way you used to and assure our winning the pennant. Hatefully yours, Nick Petersen."

He was listened to in respectful silence by his boss. When Nick had finished reading, he banged a locker in glee. "The cards did the trick. Now that the fans hate me again, I'll be banging that horsehide to a fare-thee-well." So long, Skipper, see you tomorrow."

BUT Nick wasn't in the lineup next day. In fact, he wasn't even in the park. Naturally, the reporters were curious as to his absence after yesterday's day of days. Cornered by their eager questions the manager revealed the details of Nick's hate me cards.

"Yes, but where IS Nick today?" chorused the press.

"Well, one of the fans took Nick a little *too* literally about hating him," sighed the manager. "As Nick left my office last night, this guy conked him with a pop bottle. Yep," he said, heading for the field, "Nick's out of his slump—and in a couple of days he'll be out of his coma!"

THE END

THE D.A. HAD AN EYEWITNESS, THAT WOULD HAVE PUT RACKETEER SID HILTON AND HIS MOB AWAY FOR LIFE. AND THEN THE WITNESS DISAPPEARED, AND HILTON WALKED OUT OF COURT A FREE MAN! WITH NO EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY A NEW TRIAL, AND THE NEWSPAPERS SCREAMING FOR RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, LIEUTENANT MAC McCOY OF HOMICIDE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS WAS CALLED IN. HE SOON DECIDED THAT TO RESORT TO TRICKERY WAS HIS BEST BET TO SOLVE...
THE "MISSING WITNESS MYSTERY"
THAT'S "IT, SID! NOW WE'LL HAVE THE WHOLE CITY TO OURSELVES!
OKAY, BOYS! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. WE'VE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME ALREADY!
STAN CAMPBELL

SGT., GET LIEUTENANT McCOY IN HERE RIGHT AWAY!
YES, SIR.
WITNESS VANISHES
P.D. NEGLIGENCE
THEY'RE REALLY LAYING IT ONTO US THIS TIME, MAC, AND THE WORST OF IT IS, THEY'RE RIGHT!
I KNOW, COMMISSIONER, I WAS IN COURT YESTERDAY. THE D.A.'S CASE COLLAPSED COMPLETELY WHEN THAT WITNESS FAILED TO SHOW UP. JUST VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE. WITH NO WITNESS AGAINST HIM, SID HILTON WILL NEVER BE CONVICTED.

THE WITNESS SHOULD HAVE BEEN HELD IN CUSTODY UNTIL AFTER HE TESTIFIED.
HE'S A BUSINESSMAN, SIR, AND CLAIMED HE HAD NO-ONE TO TAKE CARE OF HIS PLACE IF WE HELD HIM... WE HAD NO IDEA HILTON KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM.
WELL, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, HILTON GOT TO HIM AND SILENCED HIM. AND NOW THE JOB OF BRINGING HILTON IN ON A CHARGE THAT WILL STICK IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER. YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE TO IT, MAC.
DO MY BEST, SIR.

EXTRA! EXTRA! HILTON CASE WITNESS FOUND IN RIVER! EXTRA!
NOW IT'S REALLY BLOWN WIDE OPEN!
GIVE ME A PAPER, BOY.

I'D BETTER GET DOWN THERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND SEE IF I CAN FIND ANYTHING TO TIE HILTON'S BOYS TO THIS!

How 'BLACK BEAUTY' TURNS AN ALSO-RAN into "VIDEO VIC!"

HECK, NO WONDER I DIDN'T MAKE THE GRADE BEFORE, TIM. IT TOOK 'BLACK BEAUTY' AND BONOMO'S COURSE TO SHOW ME REAL TRAINING. WHAT TERRIFIC ROUTINES!

GREAT, BUT CLIMB INTO YOUR CLOTHES, KID. CASEY OVER AT THE ARENA WANTS TO LOOK YOU OVER.

A FEW WEEKS LATER

NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE WINNAH AT THE ARENA TONITE ...THE NEW STAR... VIDEO VIC!

GEE WHIZ, VIDEO VIC IS VIC -- *MY VIC!!* GANGWAY, FOLKS, I'M GETTING HIM ON THE PHONE RIGHT NOW!

OH, MARGE, DO YOU REALLY KNOW VIDEO VIC? YOU LUCKY GIRL, YOU!

I'M PROUD TO KNOW YOU, VIDEO VIC. MY WIFE AND I SAW YOU WIN LAST NIGHT. I'VE GOT BIG PLANS FOR YOU HERE.

SURE, VIC, THAT CRUSHER JOB IS YOURS IF YOU STILL WANT IT.

THANKS MR. BURKE --OKAY MORAN, I KNOW I CAN LICK ANY JOB NOW!

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INCREASE YOUR STRENGTH • BUILD YOUR BODY

JOE BONOMO
World's Strongman, Hercules of the Screen, International Authority on Health & Strength.

BECOME AN ALL-AROUND WINNER

WIN FRIENDS • GAIN POPULARITY • BE A SUCCESS

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YOUR MONEY BACK IF NOT SATISFIED

USES PHOTO-INSTRUCTOR METHOD

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LOOK AT WHAT YOU GET!

This big action-packed *'Power-Plus'* CABLE COURSE is literally packed with dynamite . . . every word batted out for you by Joe Bonomo himself. Many of today's strongmen paid $25.00 for these same instructions as a personalized mail order course. You get it now for only $4.95 . . including Joe Bonomo's famous *'Black Beauty'* Progressive 5-Cable Exerciser as a FREE gift to you. Don't wait! Act RIGHT AWAY!

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Why grope in the dark wishing? Why let other guys run off with your best girl . . . steal that promotion from you . . . take away that position on the team? Now, in the amazing new 'Black-Beauty' 5-Cable Progressive Exerciser and Joe Bonomo's personal instruction 'Power-Plus' method you, too, can become an *all-around winner!*

SCIENTIFIC! AND HOW!

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Jack Dempsey says:

"I consider your "Power-Plus" Course tops for all-around physical development — power, strength — endurance. The secrets and short cuts you reveal with your system of body development are miraculous and I cannot endorse your course too highly."

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Okay, Joe! Rush me your 'Power-Plus' Cable Course including, FREE of any additional charge, your new 'Black Beauty' 5-Cable Progressive Exerciser. I'll try the 'Power-Plus' Bonomo method for 2 weeks. If I am not 100% satisfied I can return it for an immediate refund.

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☐ Send C.O.D. for $4.95 plus shipping charges.

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LET'S GET DOWN TO THE WATERFRONT, CASEY. THEY'VE FOUND OUR MISSING WITNESS IN THE RIVER!
WE WERE ON OUR WAY THERE WHEN YOU STOPPED US, LT.

GLAD YOU'RE HERE, LIEUTENANT! IT'S OUR WITNESS, ALL RIGHT! AND IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT...THAT'S FOR SURE! FOUND UNDER THE PIER A WHILE AGO BY SOME KIDS! WONDER WHAT THE PAPERS'LL MAKE OF THIS!

HE'S BEEN DEAD ABOUT THREE DAYS, LT. HE WAS DEAD WHEN HE HIT THE WATER AND THE AIR IN HIS LUNGS FLOATED THE BODY ONCE IT WAS FREE.
ANY REASON TO BELIEVE HE WAS THROWN IN FROM THIS PIER, DOCTOR?

NOT NECESSARILY. THE CURRENT IS VERY STRONG RIGHT HERE. HE COULD HAVE DRIFTED A LONG WAY.
THAT PUTS THE SHOOTING TWO DAYS BEFORE THE TRIAL AND THE BODY DISPOSED OF MOST ANYWHERE ON THE WATERFRONT. NOT MUCH TO GO ON.

WITH TWO SUCH CASES IN A WEEK....SURE THAT HILTON IS HIS MAN AND NO CONCLUSIVE PROOF UPON WHICH TO PROCEED, LT. McCOY CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE...
SGT, I WANT YOU TO WORK WITH ME ON THIS. WE'VE GOT TO NAIL THAT GANG... AND FAST!
YOU'RE RIGHT, LT, BUT WHERE DO WE START?

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY I KNOW OF TO SMOKE THESE GUYS OUT. FIRST I WANT THEM TO DO A LITTLE BIT OF WORRYING. NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY...

UNDER McCOY'S DIRECTION, DETECTIVES START A RUMOR THAT TRAVELS QUICKLY IN THE UNDERWORLD...
EDDIE SAYS THE D.A.'S GOT A WITNESS THAT SAW SID HILTON'S BOYS TAKE CARE OF THAT SQUEALER THE OTHER NIGHT.
FIRST I HEARD OF IT. I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE THE GUY WHO SAW IT... THINGS HAPPEN TO PEOPLE WHO KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT HILTON.
ROOMS

S'A FACT. THAT SNOOP McCOY HAS GOT THE GOODS ON HILTON AND IS LOOKIN' FOR HIM RIGHT NOW.
JUST DON'T SOUND RIGHT TO ME. SID'S TOO SMART TO LOUSE UP TWO JOBS IN A ROW!

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY, NICK... THOUGHT I'D LET YOU KNOW, JUST IN CASE.
THANKS, SID. WON'T FORGET YOU FOR PASSING IT ALONG IF THERE'S ANYTHING TO IT!

AND AN HOUR LATER AT HILTON'S APARTMENT...
IT LOOKS GOOD, ALL RIGHT, BUT I DON'T KNOW... PASSING PHONY IS OUT OF MY LINE...
SID, YOU GOT A MINUTE? THIS MIGHT BE IMPORTANT!

WHAT'S EATIN' YOU, NICK?
I GOT THE WORD A FEW MINUTES AGO THAT McCOY'S LOOKIN' FOR YOU! HE'S GOT A WITNESS TO THAT JOB THE OTHER NIGHT! GUY NAMED SMITH!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! STILL, THAT GUY McCOY HAS BEEN TOO CLOSE TO ME FOR COMFORT BEFORE. MAYBE HE HAS GOT SOMETHING! WATCH HIM FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS, NICK, AND SEE WHAT HE'S UP TO.

THERE HE IS NOW. DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY FROM US.
RIGHT, NICK.

THEY'RE SWALLOWING THE BAIT... NOW WE CAN GET OUR LITTLE PLAN INTO HIGH GEAR. BETTER TAKE A CAB SO THEY WON'T HAVE TO BE TOO OBVIOUS ABOUT TAILING ME!

AND IN A DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING...
ELROY SMITH! AND A LAWYER, TOO... MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHING IN THIS AT THAT!

I THINK WE CAN WIND IT UP TONIGHT, SGT. I'LL BE OUT TO THE HOUSE AT NINE O'CLOCK THE FIRST TIME. EVERYTHING READY OUT THERE?
BRING THEM ON, LT. WE'RE ALL SET FOR THEM!

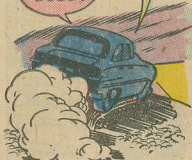
NINE OCLOCK THAT NIGHT, IN A QUIET RESIDENTIAL SECTION OF TOWN...
MR. SMITH, THE D.A. WANTS ME TO GO OVER THIS BRIEF ONCE MORE WITH YOU BEFORE WE PICK HILTON UP TOMORROW!
COME IN, LT.
428 OCEANIC DRIVE. I BETTER CHECK WITH SID RIGHT AWAY!

IT'S TRUE, SID. I CHECKED THE PHONE DIRECTORY, AND HE'S REALLY ELROY SMITH AT 428 OCEANIC! IT'S ALL ON THE LEVEL! McCOY'S WITH HIM NOW!

GOOD WORK, NICK! GET BEN AND MEET ME HERE AT TWELVE. THE THREE OF US CAN HANDLE THIS. IF McCOY'S MOVE IS FOR TOMORROW, WE'LL MAKE OURS TONIGHT!

AND AT MIDNIGHT THE THREE CRIMINALS PREPARE TO VISIT LAWYER SMITH...
THIS TIME THERE WON'T BE A WITNESS! WE'LL MAKE SURE OF THAT!
LOAD THE CHOPPER, NICK, WE'LL MAKE THIS ONE A GOOD JOB!
THERE'LL BE A SHAKEUP IN THE DEPARTMENT TOMORROW FOR SURE!

McCOY'S GONNA GET HIMSELF A COMPLEX IF YOU KEEP SNATCHIN' THESE WITNESSES OUT FROM UNDER HIM, BOSS!
I'LL GIVE HIM MORE THAN A COMPLEX IF HE DON'T LAY OFF ME!

THAT'S THE PLACE, SID. AND IT'S DARK, TOO...

HE MUST'VE GONE TO BED... TAKE IT EASY, WE DON'T WANT TO WAKE HIM UP. THIS IS GONNA BE A CINCH!

SAY... YOU AIN'T IN BED! WHAT IS THIS?
DROP THOSE GUNS AND STAY PUT! YOU LOOK LIKE THE MAN I SAW KILL THAT MAN THE OTHER NIGHT... LT. McCOY WARNED ME TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR YOU!
CLICK

YOU'RE WRONG, SMITH... I'M THE ONE WHO SHOT HIM! JUST LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET IT RIGHT NOW! THANKS FOR THE LIGHTS, YOU MAKE A BETTER TARGET!

SO YOU DID IT! THAT'S FUNNY, I'D HAVE SWORN IT WAS THIS MAN!
I WAS THERE ALL RIGHT... BUT YOU AIN'T GONNA PASS THE INFORMATION ALONG!

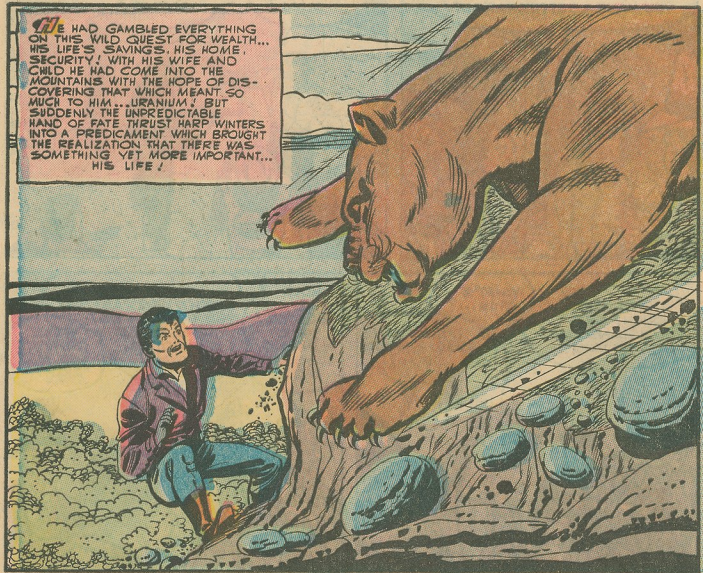
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH! GET YOUR HANDS UP! ALL OF YOU!
WHAT'S THIS...?
IT'S A FRAME, BOSS! RUN FOR IT!

HOLD IT, BUSTER! YOUR RUNNING DAYS ARE OVER!
SHUT UP, NICK! IT'S SMITH'S WORD AGAINST THE THREE OF US! THEY'LL NEVER CONVICT US, ANYWAY!
WE'LL CONVICT YOU, ALL RIGHT!

MEET THE REAL SMITH, HILTON! HE'S A LAWYER... WITH A HOBBY THAT WILL INTEREST YOU BOYS. HE MAKES HOME MOVIES. GOOD ONES, TOO. LET'S MOVE THOSE TWO CHAIRS APART, SGT, AND GIVE THEM A PREVIEW OF WHAT IS GOING TO CONVICT THEM!

THESE LIGHTS THAT WERE GOING TO MAKE ME SUCH A GOOD TARGET SHOULD SHOW YOU UP NICE AND CLEAR! AND WE'VE GOT A SOUND TRACK, TOO.
YOUR OWN CONVERSATION WITH THE SGT. CONVICTED YOU! GET THEM OUT OF HERE, CASEY.
THE END

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

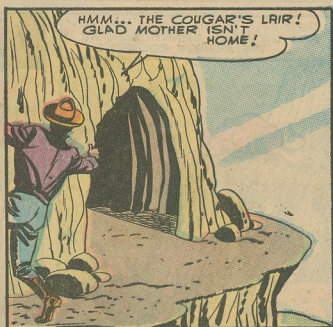
HE HAD GAMBLED EVERYTHING ON THIS WILD QUEST FOR WEALTH... HIS LIFE'S SAVINGS, HIS HOME, SECURITY! WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILD HE HAD COME INTO THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE HOPE OF DISCOVERING THAT WHICH MEANT SO MUCH TO HIM... URANIUM! BUT SUDDENLY THE UNPREDICTABLE HAND OF FATE THRUST HARP WINTERS INTO A PREDICAMENT WHICH BROUGHT THE REALIZATION THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING YET MORE IMPORTANT... HIS LIFE!

HOURS LATER, HARP WAS RETURNING TO THE CAR WHEN HE HEARD A TINY CRY OF DISTRESS...
ANOTHER DAY AND NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT BUT... HEY, WHAT WAS THAT?

SOUNDS AS THOUGH IT'S COMING UP FROM OVER THE CLIFF!

A COUGAR CUB! WELL, I CAN'T LEAVE YOU THERE TO STARVE! I'D BETTER HELP YOU!

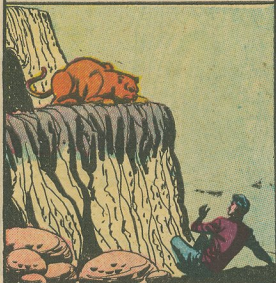
HMM... THE COUGAR'S LAIR! GLAD MOTHER ISN'T HOME!

COME ON, KIDDO! I'LL HAVE YOU BACK HOME IN A JIFFY!

STOP WIGGLING! THERE'S A SEVENTY FOOT DROP BELOW US!

HARP HAD SET THE CUB SAFELY ON THE LEDGE WHEN SUDDENLY A PIERCING SCREAM SPLIT THE STILLNESS OF THE MOUNTAINS...
WHA...!

...AND AT THAT INSTANCE, HE LOST HIS FOOT-HOLD...

HARP FELL TO THE LEDGE BELOW AND GRABBED FRANTICALLY AT THE ROUGH ROCKS...

WHAT A BREAK! THE FALL SAVED MY LIFE... BUT FOR HOW LONG?

THIS IS TERRIBLE! THAT CAVE ABOVE IS THE COUGAR'S LAIR...I'LL BE HELD ON THIS LEDGE...

BUT IT WILL BE DARK SOON... JEAN WILL KNOW I'M IN TROUBLE AND DRIVE TO GET HELP! THAT IS, IF I DIDN'T...

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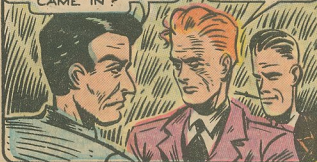
IF YOU WERE THERE ON THE SIDE OF THE CLIFF... IF YOUR LOVED ONES WERE LEFT ALONE IN THE MOUNTAINS AS NIGHT FELL... IF YOU HAD HARP'S CHOICE... ***WHAT WOULD YOU DO?*** $10 WILL BE AWARDED FOR THE BEST ANSWER SELECTED: SEND IN YOUR ANSWERS TO... AL FAGO, CHARLTON COMIC GROUP, DERBY, CONN.

MINIT
MYSTERY
by Sam Perl
CAN YOU SOLVE IT?
IF NOT-TURN THE LAST PANEL UPSIDE DOWN...

OUR STORY OPENS IN THE PARK AVENUE MANSION OF SILAS MONROE.
YOU DID KILL HIM! YOU'VE GOT THE KNIFE IN YOUR HAND RIGHT NOW! I'M CALLING THE POLICE!
NO! ROGER!
NO! IT ISN'T TRUE!

LATER... AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, GREG ABBOTT, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, TAKES OVER...

YOU SAY YOU WERE REMOVING THE KNIFE FROM YOUR GRAND-FATHER'S BODY WHEN YOUR STEP BROTHER CAME IN?
YES! I DIDN'T KILL OLD SILAS! I HAD NO MOTIVE!

HE DID! HIS FINGERPRINTS ARE ON THE HANDLE! WHERE IS THE KNIFE NOW?
BEING EXAMINED IN THE LABORATORY!
NO!

HERE IT IS SIR! AND THE REPORT YOU ASKED FOR!
HMM---THEN I ARREST YOU... ROGER WAYNE!
HOW DID GREG ABBOTT KNOW? JUST TURN THE PAGE UPSIDE DOWN AND LOOK AT THE LAST PANEL!

ME--HUH?
YES! YOU SEE, YOUR PRINTS WERE ON THE BLADE! YOU THREW THE KNIFE AT YOUR GRAND-FATHER! YOUR STEP-BROTHER MADE THE PRINTS WHEN HE WITHDREW THE KNIFE!
HE HOPED TO INHERIT THE MUNROE MILLIONS!

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Big Line of Over 50 Thrilling Money-Makers!

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See for yourself how much money you'll make. Mail Coupon TODAY for "Feature" 21 Card Christmas Assortment on approval and FREE samples of low priced name-imprinted Personal Christmas Cards. We'll also include FREE, our beautiful, big, full color catalog of entire line to start you making extra money immediately.

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